

811.08
SONGS 805
OF
HOOSIER
SINGERS.

INDIANA ROOM

PAMPHLET FILE

INDIANA - Poetry

CULMER,
BELLMAN,
FOWLER,
LAYTON,
SEARCY,
RICE.

SONGS

.....OF HOOSIER

SINGERS.

WITH PORTRAITS.

JETHRO C. CULMER.

Spencer, Indiana.

BESSIE JOHNSON-BELLMAN.

Andrews, Indiana.

WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER,

Martinsville, Indiana.

HARVEY PORTER LAYTON,

Marshfield, Indiana.

KATE WARTHEN SEARCY,

Wartrace, Tennessee.

ALONZO LEORA RICE,

Ray's Crossing, Indiana.

1898.

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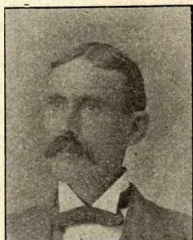
IN SEPTEMBER.



JETHRO C. CULMER.



Now sunburned autumn comes
among the hills
Flouting the green conventions
She is strong—
The sumac reddens as she comes
along
And the wan marsh with fire of
gold she fills.
The sun makes haste, and undue
heat he spills
Into the noon, and lank grass-
hoppers throng.
The rusty steeples. The locust
sings his song
With growing stress—I know not
what he wills.



From lowland cornfields, standing stark and
pale.
With tattered shadows carpeting their
ways.
I hear at intervals a lonely quail
Who makes his meaning clear in simple
phrase—
He listens where the morning glories trail
And calls again throughout the startled
maize.



THE ROBIN SINGS.



The robin sings in the frozen marsh
Of a day the summer-time will bring—
The fields are sullen, the reeds are harsh.
But a full, warm note doth robin sing.

The day is far, but the day is fair.
And seems to bloom for him while he sings—
The listening fields are not so bare
And a milder freak the marsh wind flings.
—JETHRO C. CULMER.

THE MORNING TRYST.



When the ships of the morning come sailing in
Out from the seas of splendor,
When night veils are grown to be mistily thin
And the air aromatic and tender,
When pale lilies shake from their faces the
dew
And the rose, sweetly heavy, hangs low,
It is then, my dear love, I'll be waiting for
you
When the East wears its Orient glow.

Then lightly you'll trip o'er the dew jeweled
mead,
Through the plume of white mist in the
vale;
Over the brooklet your way you will speed
To the silverbitch, slender and pale,
And there I'll be waiting, my Mary to greet,
My Mary—the light of my eyes!
Then for a few golden moments—how fleet—
Two fond hearts will taste Paradise.

—BESSIE JOHNSON-BELLMAN.



IN THE SHADOWS.



If death means that no longer we partake
Of earth's fair feast; that we no more can
know
Enjoyment in the roses; winds that blow,
When crimson clouds of morning gladly
break,
And all the valleys and the woodlands make
Triumphal arches; heeding not the flow
Of winding rivers, or the mist and snow.—
If this be death, then I shall not awake.
My life is purposeless; with empty hand,
I mark each year, the rose, the bird, the bee;
I catch the scent that gladdens all the land;
I hear the song that rings full-throated, free;
And view the honey, but I understand
In this wide bounty there is nought for me.

—ALONZO LEORA RICE.

THE EDGE OF THE WOODS.



Here clover blooms and is the brown bees
theme—

A little brook slips down from its high well.
Tinkles upon the ripple like a bell
And falls among the rushes like a dream.
The wilds are soft with many a misty gleam—
Some near vine sheds its fragrance, and a
spell

Of hidden song falls ceaselessly, to quell
Morrrows and yesterdays and thoughts ex-
treme.

'Tis good to be with mother earth apart—
To lie in her warm lap and hush my cry.
Seeing the rosebuds into color start—
To listen to her gentle lullaby
Of lowly things, and soothe my anxious heart
When its wild longings push against the sky.

—JETHRO C. CULMER.



THE COWBOY'S SONG.



Prairie winds all around me are sighing!
For a home's pleasing comforts I yearn.
Yet high in my heart hope is flying.
For my darling awaits my return.
Yes, my darling awaits for my coming!
She said, when she kissed me adieu.
"Go, precious one, hasten! The sooner
To come back and find I've been true!"

A hard fight with grim fortune I'm making.
And I long that the scales may soon turn.
For oh, how my heart is sore aching
For the darling who waits my return!
Yes, my darling awaits for my coming!
She said, when she kissed me adieu.
"Go, precious one, hasten! The sooner
To come back and find I've been true!"

—KATE WARTHEN SEARCY.

AN IDYL OF THE PAST.



One moment in the dim recess
Of that grim past let me reside,
And long once more for love's caress,
The charm of some one's tenderness
And ideals deified.

Through narrow paths that I have known,
At eventide again I stroll,
And see the village lights that shone
Upon a watcher, who, alone,
Sat on a grassy knoll.

Oh! there within the self-same place
A broken-hearted lover stood;
Torn from a sweetheart's fond embrace—
Soured cynic, standing face to face
With elfish solitude.

What wonder that the scar remains
E'en in this far and distant day!
What wonder that the self-same chains
Still bind me to those leafy lanes
Where she was wont to stray!
—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



LIFE.



Lo, it is night and yonder is the moon—
The hill tops rise and smile
And the deep vale lies black across the land—
There is no sound or song—
Naught moving, save the slowly changing
light

And now an errant star, wild riding down
The far off field of blue, in urgent quest.
O, my vain soul! have peace—
The world alone is mine, and I would grow
As a tall tree into the Heavenward air,
Knitting my roots more deeply in the earth
While day abounds and sunshine warms the
world;

Or, when the darkness and the blast come on,
Stand high against the battling storm, and
know
The mighty joy of bravery—
For there are life and death, and life is mine
And death seems far away—a sacred thing.
—JETHRO C. CULMER.

AMBITION.



BESSIE JOHNSON-BELLMAN.



O talk not to me of the sin of am-
bition,
'Tis the glorious forecast of com-
ing fruition;
'Tis the acorn's proud swelling to
copy the oak.
'Tis the felling of forests by many
a stroke;
'Tis the doing one's noblest and
best every day.
The striving to live in an ideal
way.
The meaner self crushed and the
better self grown—
Ambition, come thou! In this heart
set thy throne!



IN A LETTER.



Petals of roses from yesterday,—
Odorous, faded and dry.
Proudly they flaunted their colors so gay.
Nor feared that such as I
Should ruthlessly strip from their nodding
spray.
And fold them away, to die.

The pretty dears, they little knew
My purpose: I but meant
To send them far away to you.
And they should be content
To symbolize a friendship true
Ere their brief charm is spent.

—BESSIE JOHNSON-BELLMAN.

TO A PRAIRIE BARD.



"I want the hills! I want the streams!
I'm sick of prairie sand,
I want to catch the morning gleams
Across the tumbling land."—MERWIN.

My bard is homesick I now see.
He yearns for forest shades,
He dreams of streams that flow so free
Through cat-tail everglades.
He catches gleams from sand to hill
And tosses in his chair.
He craves the dancing, laughing rill.
The forest, vine and tare.

I have been homesick for all these.
I know his craving well.
I love the hills and streams and leaves.
Far more than I can tell.
No prairie field has charms for me.
I stroll by forest streams,
The giant trees in gallantry
Toss down the sunny gleams.

My prairie bard, you come to-day.
I'll take you for a stroll.
O'er the hills and streams—away
To mossy forest knoll;
We'll catch the breath of purest air,
Where hawthorn scents the breeze.—
We'll hide away from thorny care,
Behind the shady trees.
—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.



THE ELFIN KNIGHT.



The moon is up, and flooding with her bright
And tranquil rays the river-shore and
glade;
And here within this leafy colonade,
Sequestered deep from mortal sound or sight,
I pause to hear the plaint of Elfin Knight.
As low he trills his evening serenade
Beneath his lover's bower, half-afraid
It will not please nor waken love's delight.
A favored minstrel! Where the lilies lean,
She softly watches him with soul-lit eyes,
And hand aloft lest leaves that intervene
Shut out the music of his heart-felt sighs.
And though to him secluded and unseen,
She gives his tender message sweet replies.
—ALONZO LEORA RICE.

TO AN ANGRY SUITOR.



I answered you gently, but firmly. "No!"
When you asked me to be your wife;
Why will you declare my refusal unfair,
And say it has blasted your life?
I did not snare this—your offer amiss
Of your love, your land and your name—
You candidly own! Then why say of stone
Is my heart? As if I were to blame!

I answered you gently and firmly then,
And I told you the reason why;
You know if I could I would spare you this
pain.
But I can not—will not—live a lie.
I could not be true to my vows and to you—
Without love I never shall wed;
'Twould be life-time dirge—you are cruel to
urge—
'Twere better we both be dead.

Don't say that your love for both is enough!
Ere long you would discover
That a one-sided love is comfortless stuff
To the one who is the lover.
Though your love now is strong it would not
be long
Till you'd curse the day when we met;
But I trust that we will for aye be friends
still.
And neither have aught to regret.

Resign your false hopes; your anguish re-
move;
You are too brave to weakly repine.
The course I've expressed I have judged to
be best
Both for your future weal and for mine.
You will thank me, I know, as years come
and go;
You may win you a worthier bride.
Who will return love real, such as I do not
feel.
And will faithfully stand by your side.

—KATE WARTHEN SEARCY.

SOMETIME.



Sometime, sometime,
Promises are made,
By a youth and hopeful girl,
Rosy cheek and chestnut curl,
Strolling in the shade—
Sometime, sometime,
Golden fancies fade.

Sometime, sometime!
Have you ever thought
How you promised years ago
To be true in weal or woe,
When your heart meant naught?
Sometime, you will
See the wreck you wrought.

Sometime, sometime,
When the end is near,
You will take a casual glance
Backward o'er the broad expanse,
To the shadows drear,—
Sometime, sometime,
Teardrops will appear.
—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



A WISH: TO MARJORIE.



If change must come to you when you ascend
To those far courts where we sojourn for
aye.
How shall I know you in that distant day,
When scenes of earth with those of Heaven
blend?
How shall I come to you who now attend
My footsteps as I journey down the way?
What sign between us shall there be to say,
You stand within the presence of your friend?
I know naught of the wonderland that lies
Secluded from my view; but should a change
Possess the dreamy depths of those blue
eyes,
Or rose-red cheeks, or bind your tresses'
range.
I should not know you: in the olden guise,
I hope to greet you when all things are
strange.

—ALONZO LEORA RICE.

HOMESTEAD DREAMS.



If I could stroll to pasture shades,
Where homestead dreams are old,
Where stately trees stand guard at glades,—
I guard my shepherd's fold;
The world would seem once more anew,
The languid streams would wake,
The woodland morn through flashing dew,
Would stroll down through the brake.

The birds would sing in sweeter muse,
The torch of noon would glare;
The sumac flames at night refuse
To let me go from there.
No village mars this dear retreat.
No plowshare turns the clay,
I eat the apples which are sweet.
And throw the cores away.

The sober and the gay with smiles
Think of my homestead dreams,
Where stately trees for miles and miles.
Fringe laughing, forest streams.
Dreams of home are dreamed again,
Where palace stones are gay,
I am to-day as I was then,
A part of forest clay.

—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.



FOR YOU.



I send you some pansies to-day, friend,
That were cared for by my own hands,
And they rival in beauty and fragrance
The products of sunnier lands.
O, the rose is the flower of romance.
The violet vows to be true,
But the delicate odor of heart's-ease
Always reminds me of you.

They were waked by the morning sunbeams
And bathed in the evening dew;
They slept all night in the white moonlight,—
They knew they were growing for you!
So wear them, because of our friendship;
Let them lie in your bonnie brown hair.
Then, after long weeks of waiting
They will find their reward, nestling there.

—BESSIE JOHNSON-BELLMAN.

THE HORSEBACK RIDE.



The prairie, the prairie! Its beauties, oh,
see!
Come gallop its green, rolling surface with
me:
The swish of its grasses makes faint music,
sweet,
Bestirred by our galloping horses' swift feet.
Then over the hillocks and straight to the
West,
To the land by the wind and sun both loved
the best,
Through briar-set copses were jackrabbits
sleep.
Through rough, rocky canons where silver
brooks creep,
Then away once again through the swift
swirling air
That plucks like sprite fingers your clothing
and hair.
O, with wild exultation your true heart will
beat
When over the prairie on mustang so fleet
You feel all your being the center of power,—
And oft you will sigh for return of this hour
When once more ensconced in your far, city
home,
So mount your good mustang, and come,
stranger, come!

—BESSIE JOHNSON-BELLMAN.



THE RED BIRD IN WINTER.



When wintry woods are silent with the cold
And all the paths are deep with dazzling
grit,
Some gracious mood of Fortune may permit
A weary-eyed snow-gazer to behold
The vivid red bird. He is blithe and bold,
Haunting the dreary elm tops, he will sit
Beside the dark green mistletoe, or flit
In ruddy flame athwart the frozen world.

Some morning, when the glory of the sun
Falls upon groves of crystal, he will sing
A psalm of the universe, so fit
That all the shadowy purple shall be won
And dreams be born of fair realms, widening
From mortal coigne to verges infinite.

—JETHRO C. CULMER.

LOOKING BACK.



WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



I'm weary of the narrow way
That I have trod these lonely
years—

Oh! let me leave it for a day,
And stroll in other spheres.

Let me recline in childish mirth
Away from life's cares—fancy
free,

Beside the broad and cheerful
hearth,
And dream of things to be.

Let stern ambition take her
place,
Within my young and hopeful
soul.

And there in dreamland's fond
embrace,
Look forth and see the goal!

Oh! let me wander to the source
Of life's long stream—and be a boy,
Before it gathers on its course,
Rude pebbles of alloy!

For I am not what I would be.
If I were but a boy once more—
To sail again, the troubled sea
Still farther from the shore.

I know that I would realize
Those tender dreams of long ago;
The bad would vanish—and the skies
Would gleam with brighter glow.



THE PLAY IS DONE.



The play is done—the curtains fall
Upon the saddest act of all—

A woeful tragedy of tears,
A glimpse of those forgotten years
Whose memory wakens with the call
Of piping quail upon the wall.
Or mournful melody withal.

Of that sad echo filled with fears—

The play is done.

—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.

A COMPLAINT.



Depart, thou ever-vexing gloom,
My heart is full of care
My life is shadowed with a doom,
Far more than I can bear.

I stand in dreams upon a height
All viewless to my gaze,
And long for that departed light
Of golden other days.

My hopes are fled—all gold is dross,
My heart is fraught with pain,
While fleeting dangers flash across
My visionary brain.

I see the fields I loved so well.
Where once I used to rove,
Before I drank—before I fell—
Before I learned to love!

—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



A REVIEW.



The darkness falls—the night-hawk calls,
The hunter's hounds give up the chase;
The owl's lone shout,—lamp-lights are out,
And gay depart from festal place.

The game is done,—the shekels won,
The cup is empty at the pail;
The embers die,—the moonlit sky
Points out the cold, departing trail.

The embers glow, till life burns low,
And then I fade from eyes of men;
The curtain falls in life's vast halls,
Where I shall never play again.

—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.

AT MOTHER'S GRAVE.



Weep, sad winds! over this lone bed;
In chill and spring,
I come to bring
And place love's trophy o'er the dead.
Weep, sad winds! I have come again,—
With flowers rare
To scent the air,—
The flowers from my native glen.

Weep, sad winds! I am here once more;
My mother's bed
Is with the dead!
I weep till my poor heart is sore.
Weep, sad winds! For we weep alone!
I linger here
From year to year,
And mourn my loss! My own! my own!
—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.



THE SKEPTIC.



Columbia's noblest patriot, he died,
Unwept by those, whose land he worked to
save
Laid by a whim in death's unhallowed
grave,
I see him now, by England once defied,
Silent, the while his "Common Sense" replied
To the base insult that the Briton gave,
And lo, our Nation's warrior true and brave,
Was banished to the mercies of the wide
Unfeeling world, while from across the sea,
Came news of one who could not be sup-
pressed,
But proclaimed liberty, though bound
with chain,
Or shackled with disgrace and poverty.
O say, Fanatic, is our hero blest?
Where dwells to-day the skeptic, Thomas
Paine?

—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.

A HOOSIER PICTURE.



HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.



It's kind o' nice to think about.
The shade I use to walk into
An' stay all day—jist laid squar'
out—
To fish an' snare the minner-
crew.
Cute silver-sides wud more 'n
glis'en
Down in the water-hole,—thar
I'd
Set an' nod—an' see, an' lis'en
At the cows—worter up mid-
side,—
Stomp an' throw their heads
'round each way
'Cause the flies wuz bad.—Their
tails wuz
Swung 'round an' 'round, an' had
full play

With big cow flies that 'd bite an buzz.
A kingfisher—with his chatter cry—
Lit on a limb hung 'cross the crick.
To watch the minners swimmin' by,
Then chatter like he 'd played a trick.
Purty soon he 'd leap in the air
An' fly around, up through the wood;
Quicker 'n scat! he 'd be right back there—
Or send a feller jist az good.

What kep' me from glittin' lonesome
Wuz the fly-up-the-crick,—awkerd.
Long-necked,—long-legged;—by gum
He wuz the greenest actin' bird
I ever seed fly,—walk, or stand
'Round anywheres. Act like he 's beat.
No matter how it wuz. The sand
Seemed hard on his tender feet.
He walked like he 'd fall apart
If he stept on a sticky burr;
It wud purty near break his heart
If he mist what he 's fishin' fer.
He wuz lazy az he could be,—
Think he wuz by the way he 'd walk
'Round in the worter—slow az me;—
He 'd crane his neck to watch—jist gawk
'Cause I wuz doin' az I please,—
Or think 'bout his jumped-claim down
Thar in the shade where the bees
Hug the bloomis, no matter who 's 'roun'.

Thar goes the kingfisher—dives past;—
Jist scrapes the worter—awful quick;
He got the minner,—then he sast
Back at the slow fly-up-the-crick.
Then he flew up on a dry snag,
Et his dinner in highest style,—
Chatterin'—jist seemed to brag
Like he wuz better'n the whole pile.
I throwed in the water-hole,—
'Way went the kingfisher.—skeered.
The fly-up-the-crick,—crazy soul,
Like a fract'us team, done geared,
Jist went scootin' up the crick!
I wuz left to pull out fer home,
An' quilt fishin'. Drapt in my stick,
(Lodged 'ginst the foot-log an' foam)
Wound up my line—drapt in the can.
Chubs I ketched, wiggled an' flopt
In the deep, round hole in the san',
That wuz full o' worter. I stopt
An' looked a minit or so,—
No use, I tho't, to take 'em home;
I tuck 'em out, an' let 'em go
In the hole I ketched 'em from.

I'd offen leave my team an' plow,
Go to the crick to lay up fence,
In the spring when the breachy cow
Re'ch fer weeds, like she had no sense;
When grass knee-deep, everywhere.
Kivered pastures fer an' wide,
I don't know what she done it fer,
Without she was not satisfied.
I am satisfied!—I am shore.
The crick has a hole jist az deep
Az 'twuz ten year ago, or more;—
Tho' kind shifted 'round a-heap.
I long quit fishin' in the crick;
I like to think 'bout times I had,
Full o' mischief az I cud stick,
(Outer reach o' pap's ellum gad!)
I'd lounge like I wuz stuck to stay,
Watchin' the birds an' humble-bees.
Ketchin' the smell that lasts all day
Wrapt in the best an' coolest breeze.
I tho't them days wuz fine,—but not
Half az fine az they seem to-day,
When they come from the Not-For-Got.
An' hang around to make me gay.
The pictur' jist skunks what I've told
'Bout the crick, where I use to be;
Ye kaint have it fer all yer gold,—
That air pictur' wuz made fer me.

AT SUNSET.



At sunset on a green decline.
I stood and fixed a longing gaze.
Upon the east where day was born,
Now burnished in a leaden haze.
And then toward the west I turned
And saw the great red sun depart.
And thought, "as fades this splendid day,
So fades the hopes within my heart."
Full twenty seasons in the past
On such a day as this I stood.
And saw the splendor of the sun
Fade in a distant purple wood.
Beside me stood a girlish form,
Who eagerly the distance scanned.
While I a wild and careless youth
With loving heart the future planned.
She listened with a dreamful awe,
With lifted eye and lips apart,
The while the beauty of the scene
Made a firm picture on my heart.
'Twas but a dream from which I woke.
When many years had passed away.
And lo, its eloquence I saw
In the fair sunset of today.

—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



AN AUTUMN SCENE.



From barren boughs the gathered dampness
drips,
And twilight shadows softly fall around
On river-valley, and deserted ground
Of ruined gardens, where in death's eclipse
The rose's face is shadowed; shattered ships
Of broken leaves touch with a muffled
sound,
And toward the springs of freshness that
abound
The fainting lily leans with pallid lips.
The lilac presses to the fire-lit pane,
Like some devoted maiden who has slined
Beyond redemption. Shades of twilight
gain
On day's confines; the summer ranks are
thinned
But still I mark the lances of the rain
And hear the silver bugles of the wind.

—ALONZO LEORA RICE.

A BALLAD.



I saw him last night slowly walking
Along the old path on the hill—
His head was bowed down—he was talking
To himself in low tones; volatile
Were all things around him. The rill
In the valley slipped gently along.
The while he strolled onward at will,
As sad as a nightin-gale's song.

He thought of the wonderful sages,
Who slumber so solemn and still
In the cold vaults of the mystical ages
But send forth their wisdom to fill
The vaults of the mind, and instill
A hope in the suffering throng.
The while he strolled onward at will,
As sad as a nightin-gale's song.

Still backward and forward he wandered
Along the old path on the hill,
He thought of the love he had squandered
In earlier youth, and a thrill
Broke loose in his bosom to chill
His heart for its sorrowful wrong,
The while he strolled onward at will
As sad as a nightin-gale's song.

L'ENVOY.

"Ah," he murmured, "false friendship will kill
The love of the weak and the strong,"
The while he strolled onward at will
As sad as a nightin-gale's song.

—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



YOUTH AND AGE.



Young! Nimble! Playful! Gay!
This is youth when sands are fine;
This is youth when life's divine.
Young! Nimble! Playful! Gay!

Old! Worn! Decrepit! Gray!
This is age when sands are run;
This is age when life is done.
Old! Worn! Decrepit! Gray!

—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.

TWO ARTISTS.



You have heard of the wonderful window
That the Roman artist made
Of the sparkling bits of crystal
And the glowing tints arrayed,
Till it seemed complete and lovely
To the people who beheld,—
And the artist was contented,
Strong his heart with pleasure swelled.

You remember how the servant
Who assisted at the toil
Saved the cast off bits of color,
Treasured there through all the toil.
Then he built of these wee fragments
That the one had counted naught,
O, a vastly finer window
Than that by the artist wrought.

So it is, my little children,
In this life through which we move;
Not the one with wealth and honor
Shall the greatest progress prove.
But the child of humble fortune,
Who can toil with steadfast eye,
Shall behold his window growing
Still more fair, as years go by.
—BESSIE JOHNSON-BELLMAN.



DISAPPOINTMENT.



In joy I sit and think
About how love shall be,
I walk life's river brink
And sail upon life's sea:
These lines were sung to one,
Who sleeps the sleep of death;
The heart I nobly won
Is gone with fleeting breath.

I con the tear-stained lines,
I think of them in mart,—
Beyond life's bleak confines,
There is a broken heart.
I sit and think again
About how love shall be;
In haunts of busy men,
My soul goes out from me.
—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.

FROM OUT THE GLOOM.



(O Memory, thou, the goddess, whom
The great Jehovah gave,
To those who linger near the gloom
Of some neglected grave!)

Moved by the noonday heat, I stroll
Into the quiet glade,
And there converse with thee, my Soul,
On hopes that never fade!

From out the gloom of vanished years
I see an angel face,
Peer with its eloquence of tears
Upon my resting place.

Alas! fair maiden, guileless girl!
At mention of thy name,
The breeze that tossed thy golden curl
Fans love into a flame.

Through shining fields, again we trip,
To where the waters play,
And disembark from childhood's ship,
And watch it sail away.

Before it faded from the view
Of watchers on the shore,
A message came that day to you,
And you were seen no more.

And even to this distant day,
I wander to your tomb,
And see above your lifeless clay,
A light shine through the gloom.

—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



PEACE.



Before me stretches a shoreless sea.
Laving a sun-set boundary—
A bankless, sourceless river,—
And as life's silvery billows roll,
Around an island in my soul,
My heart feels peace forever.

—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.

THE NOW AND THEN.



The bursting buds, the apple bloom.
The drowsy river's song,
Bring back the lingering brightness of
A day departed long.

I see again the many friends
I loved in days of yore,
Returning with their gifts of praise
I can possess no more.

Ah! fleeting remnant of a dream.
To what port hast thou flown?
And why was I left desolate
So near a worldly throne?

The echo comes as once it came
To me, when shone the star
Of all my future hopefulness
So brilliant from afar.

The muse that brought me comfort once,
In brighter, fairer days,
Has turned her children from the Gate
To drift o'er varied ways.

The books I loved now occupy
"Depopulated marts,"
While I display to transient friends
A winning hand at hearts.

—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



BEHIND THE SCENES.



Ring up the curtain! let the play go on.
Although one actor weary at his heart,
Cares now no longer to take up his part
In life's perplexing scene. The rosy dawn
Is none the dimmer though one ray be gone,
And so the tale will lose none of its art
To charm the ear or cause the tear to start,
With this one player from the stage with-
drawn.

The farce is ended; lay the mask aside
That has beguiled the midnight's passing jest;
From all the mimicry, the made-up pride,
The fond delusion, he now longs for rest;
Joy years ago by gleaming foot-lights died,
But this sad truth the world has never
guessed.

—ALONZO LEORA RICE.

KISS AND SAY, GOOD-BY.



KATE WARTHEN SEARCY.



Yes, I'm lonely! Life grew vain
when
Husband's train ran off the track.
Blithe he joined his fellow train-
men,
Still in death they brought him
back.
O, my darling! How I've missed
him
Ever since that fateful day.
But I'm so glad that I kissed him
Just before he went away.

Wife, your husband! How you
need him!
Yet Death's summons may be
near.
Then don't slight him. Stop and
heed him
With a loving "Good-by, dear!"

Husband, when from home you're starting,
Though no danger you deservy.
Oft no meeting follows parting;
Kiss your wife and say "Good-by!"
Is she cross? Don't frown and hurry.
But take time to kiss and say,
"Now, be good, dear! Don't you worry!
"Good-by!" as you go away.

It may change a cloud to sky-land,
It may lessen future woe,
If you'll both be brave and smile and
Say "Good-by!" before you go!



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THE COLORED FIDDLER.



Tunes drippin', slippin', fum my lovin' fiddle-
bow.
An' toes tippin', trippin', on de ole punchin-
flo';
An' I tilt back my cheer like a lord or a
king.
Givin' my elbow kind o' zig-zag twist or
swing.
An' my ole fiddle grunts when I saw on de
bass—
An' sweat am drippin' down fum my ole cull-
ud face.

Men dancin', prancin', like de flo' am all dar
own.
An' girls 'vancin', glancin', chucklin' in lowah
tone;
De cabin am roarin', fum rafter to de
flo'.
Wid soun' o' my fiddle an' trippin' o' de
toe.
My heart am runnin' ober wid noise 'bout de
place.
While sweat am drippin' down fum my ole
cullud face.

Tunes drippin', slippin', fum my lovin' fiddle-
bow.
An' toes tippin', trippin', on de ole punchin-
flo'.
O Massa! none knows de way I feels when I
play.
Fo' my heart's full o' music—I'se younger
to-day;
My ole fiddle laughs when it's hugged in its
place.
It sees sweat am drippin' fum my ole cullud
face.

— HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.

SUMMER.



Grant me the thought of Summer, when she
keeps

Her dear June vigil over nesting things
And optimistic greenness—when she brings
To darkling fernbanks in the forest deeps
A boon of campion stars; or lurks and leaps
In cloud and ray, and ripening essence
flings

On July fields; or, done with ministerings,
Lies down beneath the windy trees and
sleeps.

Eastward, in Eden, at the dawn of grace
Her charm was chiefest. The unpracticed
eyes

Of Adam gathered his first thrill from her.
The art that knows her not grows common-
place.

Mother of ethics, she—light of the wise
And sweet companion, whom true hearts
prefer.

—JETHRO C. CULMER.



A MODEL HUSBAND.



A man who will work and from duty ne'er
shirk.

Though his joys decrease and cares double;
Who will patiently wait when dinner is late,
And not scold his wife for the trouble.
Of religious mood, sober, thoughtful and
good;

All kinds of intoxicants scorning;
Who will milk the cow, with unruffled brow,
And kindle the fires in the morning.

A gentleman quite; who will perish in fight
If his country's safety requires it;
Who will often in life give a dime to his wife
Without asking why she desires it;
Who of all modern lore has a wonderful store;
Who charms with his wise conversation;
With an intellect grand: who will readily
stand

As God's noblest work of creation!

—KATE WARTEN SEARCY.

DEATH'S TRIBUTE TO NAPOLEON.



Bold, reckless, heartless, solitary man!
I sought thee often in the thickest fight—
I've looked thee in the face to quell thy
 might,
But useless all! From thee, I turned to scan
The battle-field where thickest conflict ran
 With maddest current, and my fatal blight
On many a man whose soul had taken flight
Up toward the zenith, where God's holy van
Moves onward. Yea, I marked thee well,
 In Austrian fights, in Rome, and Waterloo,
And saw thee when thy high ambitions fell,
 O, modern Alexander! Rest in lieu
Of thine hard labors, while the orphans tell
 Of faded hopes, of murder, and of you!
—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.



THE OTHER LIFE.



The hope of future life was never learned
From any scroll or tome; before the time
Expression used the art of prose or rhyme,
The heart amid its lost possessions yearned
For life beyond the grave. Love weeping
 turned
And hoped that in some distant, sunny
 clime
Its mate survived, far from the surge sub-
 lime
Of death's long billow; where no rose inurned
In autumn's sepulcher, at twilight brings
The breeze to mourn its fragrant life's short
 lease;
Where skies are bright, and harps with
 golden strings
Vibrate to tuneful songs that never cease;
Where heedless of the past, the sad soul
 sings
Forever in the shining fields of peace!
—ALONZO LEORA RICE.

SONG OF NIGHT.



The heavenly lamps of midnight,
Shine through the mellow haze.
And Dian's crescent torch of light,
Drops down its golden rays.

The nectar cups with star-lit rims,
Tilt by an unseen hand—
The sparkling dew falls from their brims,
Upon the sleeping land.

The wind's low sob and mournful wail.
The lamps of night shine on.
I see the morning!—Hail! O, Hail!
The coming, golden dawn!
—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.



THE SPRING POET.



Still hies the vernal poet forth
To hear the flush streams flowing.
And feel the softening of the North
And see the new grass growing.

And any latent germ of song
Which in his heart he nurses,
Takes up the spring hope, sweet and strong
And blossoms into verses.

What though his tone be sometimes crass.
His feet inclined to stumble?
He finds his muse a wholesome lass,
And does not cant or grumble.

Through all the years he has remained.
Despite the scoffing classes
Of connoisseurs with powers strained.
Philistines, prigs and asses.

And when the final spring would bloom
The poet and his poem.
Upon the brim of time shall loom,
Her harbinger and poem.

—JETHRO C. CULMER.

THE FADED DAY.



The faded day is on the wood.
The stars shine out on high.
And like a dream of solitude,
The moon ascends the sky.

I gaze upon the ashen heap.
Of dusk and close of day;
A stillness lifts me as I sleep.
And hears me far away.

In dreams where curtains pale the past.
Sleep seals the lids of eyes;
I tread the ways of distance vast.
Then pass to azure skies.

A day of fading earthly ways.
With unseen frame of breath.
Is still a part of life-time days.
And with it comes my death.

—HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.



ON FINDING A STONE AX.



True, our modern tools are finer:
Notwithstanding, to my mind,
The primeval ax-designer
Was the greatest of his kind:

For, with precedent denied him,
He devised this cleaving blade.
And the niggard past supplied him
Only with a scrap of jade.

Then he smote, and chipped, and cluttered.
All the stone floor of his den.
And the sparks that spat and sputtered
Lighted up the years of men.

—JETHRO C. CULMER.

A ROSE AND A CURL.



One eventide, as fainter grew each sound,
Before the moon was up or lamps were lit—
The time when dusky bats begin to flit,
And fire-flies sputter in the marshy ground—
I opened Byron's poems, and I found
A turned-down leaf, and hidden under it
A rose that long had faded, and a bit
Of golden tress a hand had woven round.
And then I thought of her who years ago
Had placed the book upon her knees, and bent
Above its tender pathos; buds may blow,
And curls may dance in sunny blandishment
But such as these that suit my fancy so
I see no more along the way she went.

—ALONZO LEORA RICE.



ADUMBRANT.



O, that the morn would linger, that its loves
might live!
Now every full blown flower
Has found at once its glory and its doom.
Day waxes great, and fails.
Sweet odors came
From altars newly lighted by the dawn—
Born of the flame and dying in the heat....
Another morning shall efface this woe
With newer light...
But ever in the heart
The past grows bold by cumulative years—
The incense is dispelled—
The fire abides unquenched, and grows
To unforgetfulness.

—JETHRO C. CULMER.

THE BROKEN SHIELD.



I stand by the casket that holds her
In mute, unptying embrace.
(The hands are restfully folded;
A smile on the pale, dead face.)

The one playmate of my childhood,
Companion of older years;
My constant friend when we parted,
Adown the Vale of Tears.

She went a bride from the village;
A happier ne'er was won.
She laughed, "Dick will fight my battles,
You will fight yours alone!"

Alas, when the storm-wind sunders
The rose petals from the bloom!
Alas, when the noon-sun deadens
The violets' glad perfume!

Fewer high hopes had been cherished
Could she but then have known!
Can he another's foes vanquish,
Who can not conquer his own?

Nobly he may have struggled—
What matters it in the end?
The siege closed with a treaty
That made him the enemy's friend.

Who then was his wife's strong champion?
Who was her greatest foe?
When husbands pierce hearts with the wine-
glass,
Who stanches the life-blood's flow?

We believe that the world's deep death-
scars
God's healing touch can erase.
(The hands are peacefully folded;
A smile on the dear, dead face!)

—KATE WARTHEN SEARCY.

SOUVENIR DE COEUR.



One day, long dead, these violets
Lay in my love's dark hair,
And their odor in the quiet room
Suited her beauty rare.

And now.
Though all the world divide us, yet the
scent
Of dying violets brings to me
A sense of desolation and regret—
The Dead Sea Fruit of memory.

Why was it, love, we parted thus?
Chance wafted you away
Like thistle-down on summer air,
And Duty bade me stay.

Ah well—
We can not know the future, and perchance
Our lives are better so;
But these dead violets awake
Love's haunting afterglow.

—BESSIE JOHNSON-BELLMAN.



MID-AUTUMN.



The glad sun points again, with gentle rays,
To westward sloping pastures, strewn with
flocks,
Where meet the waters from their highland
ways
And go together down between the rocks—

Beyond the meadow's width of even sod
Where yonder yeasty sea of thorough wort
Breaks on its tawney beach of goldenrod
In graceful groups the willow trees resort.

Hung here and there upon the forest wall
Are arabesques of vine in gold and brown,
And from the walnut gables, steep and tall,
Gray mullioned windows, newly wrought,
look down.

Bright are the hues October's hand has laid
Upon the woodland with a brush of air.
The red-bird dreams amid the maple shade
And is not redder than his leafy lair.

—JETHRO C. CULMER.

AUTUMN SONG.



The dull and gloomy days are come,
And yellow leaves are falling fast—
The nights are frosty—summer's done!
The sky is smoky, and the sun
Shines dimly from the sky so vast.
The pheasants now begin to drum
Within the grove;
And far away, I hear the hum
Of locomotive on the rail;
And farther yet, the gentle call
Of lonesome quail—
And gently, gently, sweet notes fall
Of spoken love.

The days are shorter than of yore,
The horned-owls toot their doleful lay
From shady wood and far beyond,
The frog is silent in the pond.
The squirrels long have ceased their play,
And wisely do they hide their store
Of fallen nuts.
The bonnets that the milkweeds wore,
Have been borne off among the trees,
And now are resting here and there,
Safe from the breeze.
The beavers silently repair
Their tumbled huts.

The noisy jay sends its lament
To wooded hill-tops where the day
Is first discerned—and on the mead,
The melancholy turkeys feed
Upon the locusts, and at play,
The children of the settlement,
Send their halloo
Across the land where summer went;
While here and there, the lowing herd
Browse on the hill-tops where the grass
Is still unstirred—
The doves coo dolefully, alas!
'Tis their adieu.
—WILLIS WILFRED FOWLER.